



Climate Change:

Our Health in the Balance

Michigan's Public Health Week
April 14 - April 22, 2008

Food and Water Supply

There is a direct connection between climate change and the health of our nation today. Children, the elderly, the poor, and people with chronic health conditions are most at risk for negative health impacts of climate change. Extreme weather (such as heat waves, tornadoes, or hurricanes) caused by climate change can negatively affect soil temperature and moisture, challenging the food production system.

What You Should Know

- Climate change is likely to effect the production of staple crops, including rice, wheat, corn, soybeans, and potatoes.
- Crops and livestock are sensitive to climate change in both positive and negative ways. However, there is increased potential for droughts, wind storms, floods and heat waves as the climate changes, which will pose challenges for farmers and affect crop production.
- Enduring changes in climate, water supply, distribution of pests and pathogens, and soil moisture will make it less likely to continue crop production in certain regions of the country.
- Farmers will have to adapt their crops and farming techniques to match the changes in precipitation, soil erosion, pests, and temperature.

LOCAL AND NATIONAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE

U.S. EPA Climate Change Home Page

<http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/index.html>

The Pew Center for Global Climate Change

<http://www.pewclimate.org/>

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (United Nations)

<http://www.ipcc.ch/index.htm>

What You Should Know continued...

- Livestock will also be affected by climate change, both through the direct effects of greater temperature extremes and the quality and supply of grasslands and other feeds.
- Climate change will impact fresh water systems through projected increases in temperature, sea level, and changes in levels of precipitation.
- Current water management practices are likely to be inadequate to reduce the negative impacts of climate change on water supply reliability, flood risk, health, energy and aquatic ecosystems. Climate change will affect the function and operation of existing water infrastructure and water management practices.
- Changes in water supply and quality could affect the productivity of freshwater fisheries.
- Availability of some foods worldwide may lessen, causing increases in food costs and increasing the number of people who are food insecure.

What You Can Do

- Use water efficiently, both at home and at work. Only irrigate your lawn when necessary and only during the coolest part of the day. Turn off the water while shaving or brushing your teeth. Make sure you repair all toilet and faucet leaks right away – a leaky toilet can waste 200 gallons of water each day!
- Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly on your lawns and plants. Increased precipitation caused by climate change will lead to increased runoff and soil erosion, which leads to these chemicals entering into our lakes, streams and waterways.
- When gardening, select plants and flowers that are suitable for the current climate to minimize use of fertilizers.
- Plant a tree – trees help by removing carbon dioxide from the air and also help to reduce soil erosion.

Partners in Planning

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